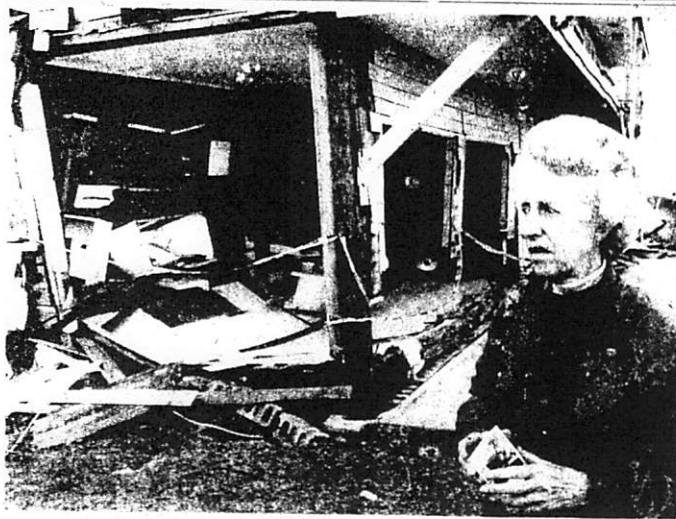


# Duxbury Clipper

Vol. XXXXI No. 26

Wednesday, November 6, 1991

Duxbury, MA 02332 Price 50¢



A stunned Jean Stevenson, owner of the Gurnet Inn, surveys the damage from last week's Nor'easter. "I'll have to wait for the dust to settle before I decide what to do." The inn has been in her family for over 100 years.

## Fierce Nor'easter Batters the Beach

Breach Fears Quelled by Army Corps and Contractor Efforts

By PAULA MAXWELL

A powerful nor'easter pounded Duxbury's shoreline last Wednesday and Thursday devastating oceanfront homes in the Gurnet Rd. area and propelling high tides over the top of the fragile 4-mile barrier beach in what was described as "a complete washover."

While beach damage estimates topped \$2 million, the most immediate concern facing the town and the Duxbury Beach Reservation, owners of the beach, was the possibility of a "breach" along the barrier beach. Some 90% of the sand dunes along the beach were destroyed by the storm, according to Harbormaster Donald Beers. He explained that a breach in the beach would happen if water breaks through and flows freely from the ocean to the bay side regardless of the tide. "We came dangerously close," he said.

"The beach did one hell of a job holding up. It's the bumper that protects the shore," said Beers of the barrier which protects Duxbury, Kingston and Plymouth bays from the ocean's force.

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### NOR'EASTER From Page 1

At least 30 pieces of heavy equipment were brought in right after the storm by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Beach Reservation to try and reclaim the beach which was rendered a virtual sandbar by the fury of the storm. DPW crews and equipment also assisted in the monumental task of stabilizing the beach and reshaping the dune structure.

The beach road which runs the entire length of the beach out to Gurnet and Saquish was completely obliterated as the sands washed over everything in the path of the surging tide.

Gurnet resident Colin Cudmore said he stood along the beach on High Pines tallest dune during the height of the storm as salt water hit him in the face. When he looked north he saw no beach visible.

Almost everyone agreed the beach devastation was much worse than that suffered in the Blizzard of 1978.

Conservation Administrator Joe Grady compared the nor'easter to the great storm of 1898, which at the time caused major changes in the topography of the beach.

Duxbury Beach Reservation Vice President Charles "Al" Krahmer, who has served on the board of trustees since 1975, called last week's storm "5 to 8 times worse" than the blizzard of '78.

"To give you a basis for comparison," he said, "we moved back 48,000 cubic yards of beach material after the blizzard of 1978 and a rough estimate of what we'll move this time is in the vicinity of 250,000 cubic yards. We've never had to face storm damage of this magnitude."

Krahmer said about 15 miles of snow fencing which supported the dunes was wiped out. Posts and cable fencing were knocked down or obliterated.

"We're talking about an environmental disaster here," he said.

Krahmer credited among others, the Mass. Coastal Zone Management Agency, Rep. Charles Mann, and the Army Corps of Engineers with prompt response in confronting the threat to the beach.

"We had nearly 25 pieces of heavy equipment down here stabilizing the dunes right after the storm," he said.

"We will recover. It will come back but it will take a lot of work," Krahmer said. "There were at least 5 or 6 potential breach areas which caused us real concern."

Other areas of the beach reservation land which were hard hit included Blakeman's parking lot and the pavilion at the north end of the beach. The parking lot was literally ripped to shreds with pieces of asphalt scattered along the bay. The 2-story pavilion was severely damaged with the back end ripped open by the surging tide.

Krahmer said the beach would remain closed for major repairs until further notice.

A shuttle service was provided by Plymouth civil defense and the efforts of the harbormaster in order to transport people back and forth to their homes at Gurnet and Saquish.

Unlike the Gurnet Rd. area, which took the full force of the nor'easter, Gurnet and Saquish escaped the full bite of the storm with relatively minor damage.

Grady said that while the beach dunes suffered severe grooves in areas south of the area of the first crossover to High Pines and in the Plum Hills section of the barrier, dune and plant structure from the resident parking lot to the old first crossover remained pretty much intact. "That is an area we've concentrated on building up in recent years," he said.

Both Krahmer and Grady noted that the beach appears wider and flatter now and in fact shifted at least 10 feet from east to west.

Both men spoke of organizing a volunteer effort to restore snow fencing to protect the newly reshaped dunes which have been bulldozed back in place by a convoy of heavy equipment.

"We're going to need some help. There simply aren't enough resources. We've got to lay about 15 to 20 miles of fencing to bank each side and lay more on top. The sooner we can secure the dunes the less likely the sand will blow away," said Grady.

Beach grass planting won't take place again until next spring. Meanwhile, about 50 acres of salt marsh along the back side of the beach has been destroyed, he said.

While crews continue to reshape dune structures and restore roadways, debris from the ocean floor is beginning to wash ashore.

Dead lobsters, fish, sea clams, and other plant and animal debris is strewn all over and beginning to smell. "The storm literally dragged the bottom of Massachusetts Bay," said Grady. "A lot of material from our beach is washing up in Plymouth."

Lobsterman Dana Waitkus, who operates a part time rubbish disposal service in town, lost 600 traps in the storm.

Waitkus and other local lobstermen saw their earnings wiped out in a flash and have petitioned the governor to aid them in receiving federal disaster relief. Traps cost at least \$50 each and are not insurable.

Virtually all of the mudflats and shellfish beds along the bay side were covered with sand, leaving shorebirds vainly searching in the aftermath. Efforts were under

way to remove the sand in order to protect the shellfish beds.

Beers said the quick response to Duxbury's beach devastation was a credit to local, state and federal officials who learned from Chatham recently what can happen when a beach is lost.

Once a breach occurs at a barrier beach, it is just a matter of time before the sandy land mass disappears or melts.

The breach at Chatham's North Beach occurred during a storm in 1987 and shortly after, the beach began to disappear causing erosion on the coastline and on other areas of the Cape.

With really no lines of demarcation, no crossovers or beach road and the sand dunes virtually destroyed, restoring Duxbury beach is a challenge requiring use of photos, maps and memory, Beers said.

Contractor Fred Nava is heading up the reconstruction effort for the Beach Reservation, directing Army Corps contractors as well as DPW crews and contractors hired by the beach reservation.

Beers said the full impact of the storm was felt on Wednesday night at peak high tide about 4:30 and again on Thursday at about 5 am.

The storm wreaked havoc at the beach but left the harbor at Mauakesett without much damage. About 30 boats pulled loose from moorings and pieces of at least one sailboat washed up in Plymouth. The harbor rose 6 to 8 inches over the town pier.

Beers said the entire beach was under water at peak high tide Wednesday. "The energy behind those waves was unbelievable," he said. "The beach washed over and stayed over for about an hour."

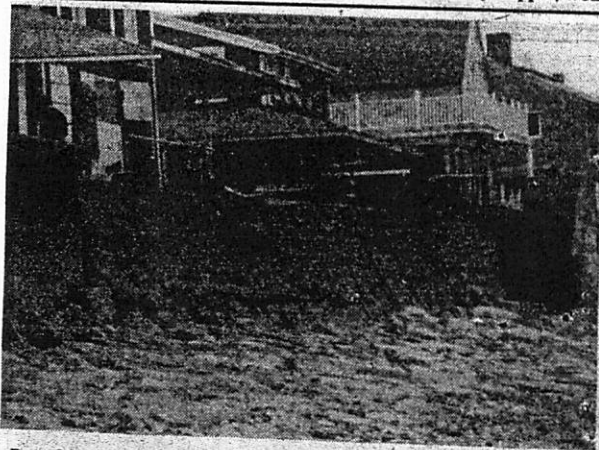
Beers recalled 3 days of heavy northeast winds peaking at over 70 mph with 15 foot tides.

As the peak high tide approached Wednesday afternoon, DPW and public safety personnel closed down the beach and restricted entry to Powder Point. Access to the Gurnet Rd. area was also restricted.

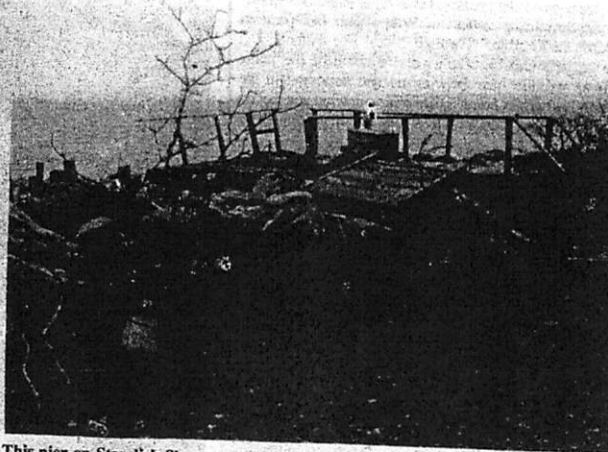
Other low lying areas off King Caesar Rd. and near Blue Fish River were flooded when the tide pushed the water over the road by about 2 feet. The Duxbury Rural & Historical Society building was surrounded by water. Police blocked off St. George St. just past the high school.

## Oceanfront Devastation

Photos by Chris Bernstein, Tom Groux, Deni Johnson, Paula Maxwell, Fran Nichols, and Judy Randall.



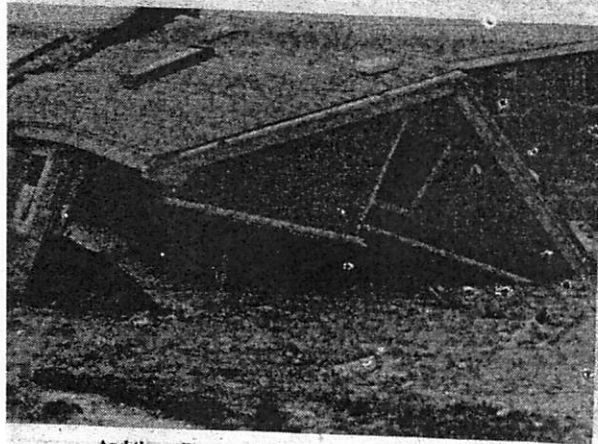
Part of the seawall that came down on the oceanfront near Gurnet Inn.



This pier on Standish Shore was badly battered by angry seas during Wednesday's nor'easter.



The rear of the Duxbury Beach pavilion at the public beach was demolished.



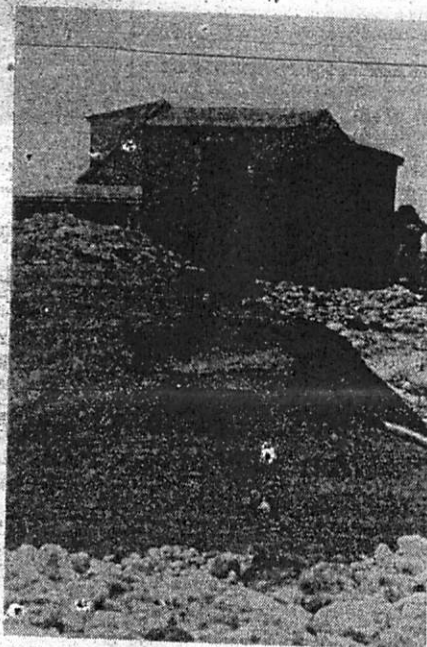
And the walls came tumbling down -- Ocean Rd.



This house was located just before Blakeman's lot on Gurnet Rd. It was a total loss except for the few pieces of furniture.



House was completely demolished after it was moved off its foundation blocking an Rd.



This public right-of-way on the Duxbury-Marshfield line, was ripped up and buckled by the force of the winds and tide.



## South Shore Natural Science Center

**Wildlife in Trouble:** Sunday, Nov. 10, 4-5:15 pm. As humans require more and more space and natural resources, what happens to the creatures that must share our space? Victoria Smythe, president of Wild Again Inc. presents "Wildlife in Trouble." Through slides, live animals, and artifacts, you will become aware of some of the many problems wildlife face growing up and surviving in the urban and suburban South Shore. Find out what you can do to help. Cosponsored by Wild Again Inc. of Bridgewater. Fee.

**Tea and Travel, Slide Presentation:** Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2-3:30 pm. Hingham historian/naturalist Phil Swanson takes you on a slide trip through the South Shore. Phil has captured the beauty of the region through the seasons with his usual wit, wisdom, and humor. Tea, sandwiches, and sweets will be served. Fee.

**Crisis in the Clam Flats/Crisis on our Shores:** Thursday, Nov. 14, 7:30-8:45 pm. A forum on shellfish and shellfishery closures in Massachusetts. An evening of presentation and discussion of the health of clams on the South Shore, the history and pre-history of shellfishing in the area, and affordable solutions that towns can implement to reopen shellfishing flats to citizens. Free admission. The program is sponsored by The Massachusetts Bay Marine Studies Consortium, North and South Rivers Watershed Assn., and South Shore Natural Science Center. A related children's program (ages 3-12) will take place at the same time. Children must be preregistered by calling 659-2559; preregistration not necessary for adult program.

**Late Autumn Heavens:** Friday, Nov. 15, 8-10 pm. Rolf Egon of the South Shore Astronomical Society presents "Late Autumn Heavens." The skies of late autumn include Perseus, the double star cluster, the Andromeda galaxy, Pleiades (the 7 sisters) and the emergence of the magnificent winter constellations. Enjoy a slide program and then go outside to the observatory to view the moon and Orion Nebula through the telescope.

The non-profit South Shore Natural Science Center is located on Jacobs Lane, Norwell, off Rte. 123 and one mile from Rte. 3, exit 13. Hours: 10-4, Monday through Saturday; Sunday 12-4.

## Council on Aging

**Surplus Food** will be available on Nov. 18 between 10 and 2 at the Girl Scout House. Bring proper identification.

**Flu Shots** will be given Nov. 14 at the GSH between 1 and 3. These shots will be given by CURA and sponsored by the Duxbury Board of Health. There will not be a regular clinic on the third Thursday in November due to the flu shots.

The next regular meeting of the COA will be at the GSH on Nov. 19. These meetings are open to the public.

**Weekly Events: Monday and Thursday**, the "Senior Dux" will be walking in Duxbury. Meet at the GSH at 8:30 am and join in the exercise. All ages welcome.

**Monday 1 pm Bowling** at Hanover Bowladrome. Call 934-6800 if you need transportation. Top bowlers

for Sept. 30: mens h.s. and h.t.: Clayton Dearborn, 117, 287; womens h.s. and h.t.: Ann White, 99, 260. Oct. 7: mens h.s. and h.t.: Tony Fernandes, 98, 273; womens h.s. and h.t.: Gert Silvia, 115, 268. Oct. 21: mens h.s. and h.t.: Tony Fernandes, 113, 292; womens h.s.: Ann White, 95; womens h.t.: Gert Silvia, 256. Oct. 28: mens h.s.: John Daley and Tony Fernandes, 112; mens h.t.: John Daley, 317; womens h.s. and h.t.: Gert Silvia, 93, 259.

**Tuesday Line Dancing**, 2-3 pm at the GSH. Liz Vinal, instructor.

**Wednesday Exercise Class**, 10-11 am at GSH. Janet Enos, instructor. Call 934-5774 for more information about Monday class.

**Thursday Card Parties** at 1 at GSH. Refreshments and prizes.

**Monthly Events: Hearing Tests** with Mary Cody of All Ears Hearing Center will be available on the third Tuesday of the month, Nov. 19, between 9 and 10:30 am at GSH, for free hearing evaluation. Call 934-5774 for an appointment.

**SHINE** Counselor Don Ducharme will assist with insurance and medical forms for processing claims and review your present coverage on Nov. 19 from 10-noon. No appointment necessary.

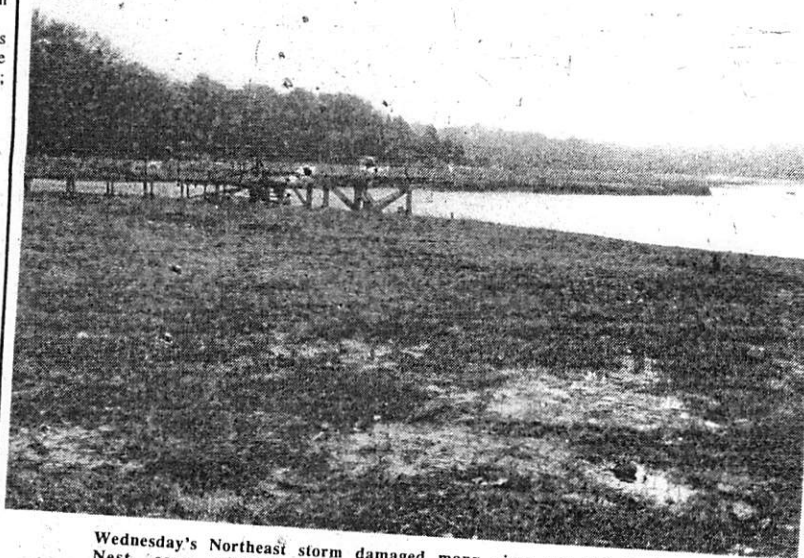
**Chore Workers** available for household repairs. If you need assistance, call 934-5774.

**Friday Bus Specials:** Nov. 8, Dartmouth Mall, Vanity Fair, etc.; Nov. 22, Braintree Mall, ABC Retail and Burlington Coat Factory, lunch in mall.

## A Landmark Lost

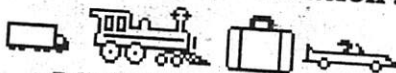


The Winslow boathouse in Eagle's Nest Cove holds fond memories for many Duxbury residents (Photo taken 5/84). The boathouse was completely ruined during last week's storm. (See accompanying picture).



Wednesday's Northeast storm damaged many piers and left Eagle's Nest cove without its beloved Winslow boathouse.

## Been Away on Vacation?



Tell Our Around Town Editors  
Lisa Morrison (934-2937)  
Jane VanHaur (934-0350)

**EARLY COPY • NOV. 13 Issue**  
Due to Veteran's Day, Monday, Nov. 11,  
COPY DEADLINES for the Nov. 13 issue  
will be as follows:

ALL ADVERTISING COPY  
CHURCH NEWS & PHOTOS FOR ARTICLES:  
NOON, FRIDAY, Nov. 8  
STRAIGHT COPY:  
NOON, SATURDAY, Nov. 9  
CLASSIFIEDS: by NOON,  
TUESDAY, Nov. 12

Please submit your ad copy and photos  
earlier if possible.

The Clipper will greatly appreciate it!



# HATS OFF TO VETS



On Veterans Day,  
the DAV asks you to  
remember that  
veterans paid the  
price of peace.



## Gurnet Rd. Area Devastated by Storm

By PAULA MAXWELL

Last week's nor'easter unleashed salt water waves of destruction in the dense neighborhoods off Gurnet Rd. wrecking beach area houses and scattering debris across an area that resembled a war zone after the storm.

By Monday, Building Inspector Kevin McDonald had condemned 10 of the area's 208 dwellings and ordered them demolished. One house that was moved off its foundation and blocked Ocean Rd. North was

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### GURNET RD. From Page 1

immediately dismantled. McDonald said he anticipated at least 2 more demolitions after further inspections were completed.

The building inspector identified 52 additional dwellings that sustained major structural damage. He said the majority of those would require completely new foundation systems and that many owners of dwellings in this category would opt for complete reconstruction.

McDonald has asked the Zoning board of appeals to expedite the processing of permit applications by temporarily delegating authority to a zoning administrator. He has volunteered to handle the job.

The fury of the storm took its toll on the area Wednesday afternoon as many residents fled the area or had to be transported by town workers to safety.

On Wednesday night police, fire department and Department of Public Works (DPW) crews had all available personnel on hand in the area of Gurnet Rd. to help clear roads and evacuate residents. Town employees made many trips in and out of the devastated area all through the night evacuating at least 50 residents. Ocean Rd. North and South were particularly hard hit.

Contents of homes were strewn everywhere and electrical and telephone service were interrupted for days. Gas leaks were abundant and sewer systems were devastated. The dull drone of pumps could be heard everywhere. Gurnet Rd. was closed off except to residents as police patrolled to prevent looting.

At least 20 automobiles in the area sustained heavy water damage. Piles of water damaged electronic equipment lay heaped as trash on the sides of road. Refrigerators and washing machines were literally washed out of houses into open space. Furniture and other household trappings littered the area. Even a 1,000 gallon oil tank added to the unclaimed debris.

Porches, decks, and broken windows in the area were strewn everywhere. Several houses were twisted right off their foundations.

No one facing the ocean was left with a front deck after the storm. The Gurnet Inn suffered heavy storm damage when the entire front of the structure collapsed.

Questions about rebuilding and flood insurance coverage were foremost in the minds of most residents in the aftermath.

Near the Marshfield line a heavy metal guardrail was twisted like tin foil, a freakish reminder of the devastation of a week ago.

Many homes were converted to lean-tos or walloped with such force that walls and windows were knocked out.

Utility crews trying to restore service were faced with sparking wires and short circuits everywhere. Service

was still not entirely restored to the area on Tuesday.

Blakeman's parking lot, which is owned by the Duxbury Beach Reservation, was completely torn up and covered with sand. Most of the pavilion at the public beach was demolished.

At the height of the tide at 4:30 pm Wednesday Gurnet Rd. was already closed off and many families had already been evacuated from the area. On Thursday, National Guard troops were brought in to the area to help restrict traffic while clean-up crews began the monumental task of digging out from the storm.

Storm stories abound. Debby Deady, a year-round resident of Ocean Rd. for the past 12 years, spoke of 20 pound rocks hurled against homes by the angry seas like projectile missiles. At one point, she saw the tide sweep over the roofs of houses.

Sand covered everything on both sides of Gurnet Rd. Storm damage fell into the categories of either structural or water damage. Roads were washed out as seawalls cracked in spots under the weight of the tide.

Fred and Inez Falkland of Cable Hill opened their home to shelter many of their neighbors who were driven out by storm damage. At least a dozen people were welcomed into their home and given food and comfort.

John Leonard, former selectman and trustee of the Duxbury Beach Reservation, said he had not seen anything like the storm in his 53 years on Gurnet Rd. Leonard's home sustained water and structural damage when the tide swept through.

Gurnet Rd. resident Walter Read, a long time member of the Duxbury Beach Improvement Assn., called the devastation to his area "catastrophic" and worse than the Blizzard of '78. He said his area is the highest taxed part of Duxbury and hoped the town would do something about cleaning up the debris.

Jim and Jenny Fraggos were forced to leave their Gurnet Rd. residence when water flooded their home. Many other elderly residents relocated with friends or relatives while the storm mess is cleaned up.

Dennis Randall, whose family owns about 4 acres of property off Gurnet Rd. and has operated the Bradford parking lot for decades, said that while the high water mark at the lot did not reach the level of the '78 storm, the physical destruction in the area was much worse.

"This was a blizzard of sand. The dunes literally washed back across the area. This storm hit us at an angle and the strike was more powerful than anything we've seen before," he said.

Fire Chief Civil Defense Director Carl O'Neil said that emergency shelter was set up at the high school but just 2 residents showed up.

"Later the Red Cross set up a central location in Marshfield to serve the area," he said.

Fire Department crews spent days pumping out the Gurnet Rd. area including low lying areas of Kentucky St. and Plymouth Rd.

A small fire broke out in an Ocean Rd. summer home but it was extinguished by rising waters before firefighters arrived on the scene.

Flooding also hit other coastal areas of town but none as bad as Gurnet Rd., where an entire section of a sea wall broke away.

Flooding also hit other coastal areas of town but none as bad as Gurnet Rd., where an entire section of a sea wall broke away.

DPW highway manager Bob Hurley said that his crews concentrated on clearing and regrading the private roads in the area to restore and protect sewer and gas lines.

DPW Director Wally Tonaszuck estimated that if the town opted to clear the debris from the homes on the private roads along the Gurnet Rd. beach area the town's costs could run between \$50,000 and \$100,000 putting the budget for trash disposal for this fiscal year in the red. He said the town could also consider placing open top roll off disposal containers in the area so residents could get rid of their debris.

An alternative, Tonaszuck said, would be for residents to take care of their own disposal and recoup costs through their insurance.

Selectman Abdul Hamadeh suggested the town take a chance on getting reimbursed from the federal government for such costs and act now to help the residents remove debris at a time they face many other financial hardships. "They have immediate direct costs to put their lives back together," he said.

Selectmen Chairman Pat Dowd and Selectman David Vogler voted against Hamadeh's motion to allow the town to shoulder the debris removal costs now.

Dowd said her immediate inclination was to help, but if the town lays out money for debris removal and funds could not be recouped, then the rest of the town's residents would pay. "The town simply can't afford to provide clean-up services," she said.

After the vote Dowd asked Tonaszuck if he could compile a list of licensed commercial haulers in the area for people to contact.

Tonaszuck said he did not recommend a relaxation of commercial permit fees for out of town haulers since Duxbury contractors already pay fees throughout the year for use of the transfer station.

# Gurnet Road Area



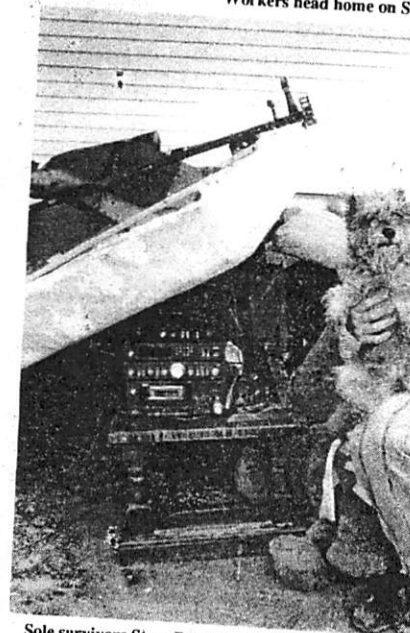
(Left) Dick Stevenson talked with a passerby on the seawall in front of the devastated Gurnet Inn. Dick recalls working early 40's.



Workers head home on Sun



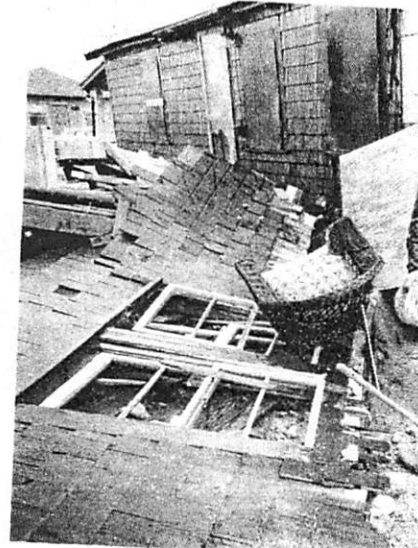
Lindsay Rice plays in the sand amidst the ruins of her grandparents cottage at 35 Ocean Rd. North.



Sole survivors Steve Bowden and his dog, Louie, stay amidst most of all their belongings.



Russell and Harriett Decatur stand on the edge of what's left of the washed out Ocean Rd. South. They surveyed their cottage, #7, which was broken in half.



For 56 years, Shirley and Walter Morrisette have had this home. They can rebuild.

# ered by Storm

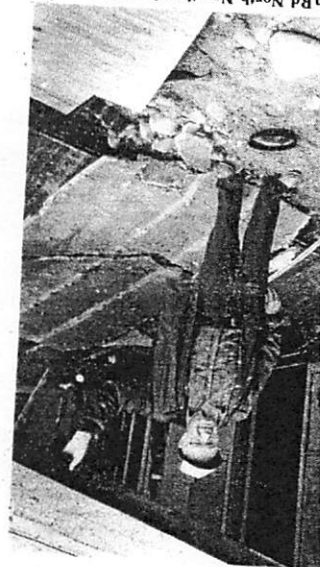
Photos by Chris Bernstein



Day of cleanup work.



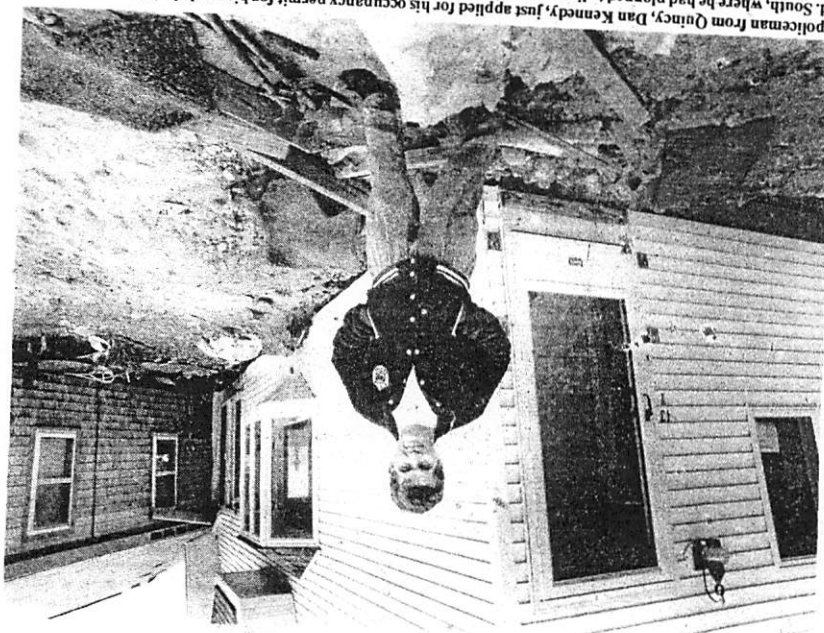
at 65 Ocean Rd. North, where they lost



n Rd. North. Now they don't think they



Nothing left along Ocean Rd. where cottages once stood.



A policeman from Quincy, Dan Kennedy, just applied for his occupancy permit for his newly built home, 13 Ocean Rd. South, where he had planned to live year round. The house was tossed like a toy into another home.



Frank Bowden is busy pumping 6 feet of water from his cellar at 65 Ocean Rd. North. His belongings are piled outside.

## Gurnet Road Area Battered by Storm

Photos by Chris Bernstein



front of the devastated Gurnet Inn. Dick recalls



Workers head home on Sunday after a long day of cleanup work.



parents cottage at 35 Ocean Rd. North.



Sole survivors Steve Bowden and his dog, Louie, stayed through the storm at 65 Ocean Rd. North, where they lost most of all their belongings.



d out Ocean Rd. South. They surveyed their

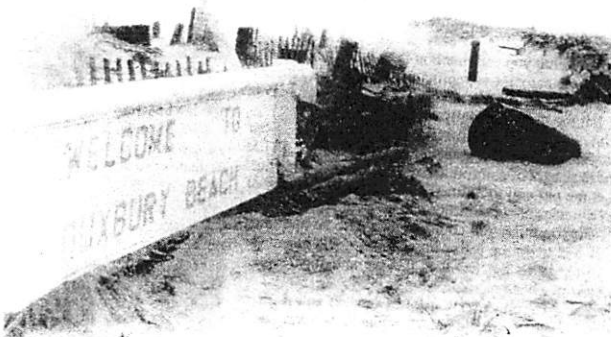


For 56 years, Shirley and Walter Morrisette have had their cottage at 35 Ocean Rd. North. Now they don't think they can rebuild.

## The Ravages and the Restoration



The parking lot at Mattakesett was swept by the surging tide. Waves of water ripple in front of the Yacht Club.



The opening to the beach was not a welcoming sight following the storm.



Rising tides nearly 2 hours before peak high tide skipped through the pier.



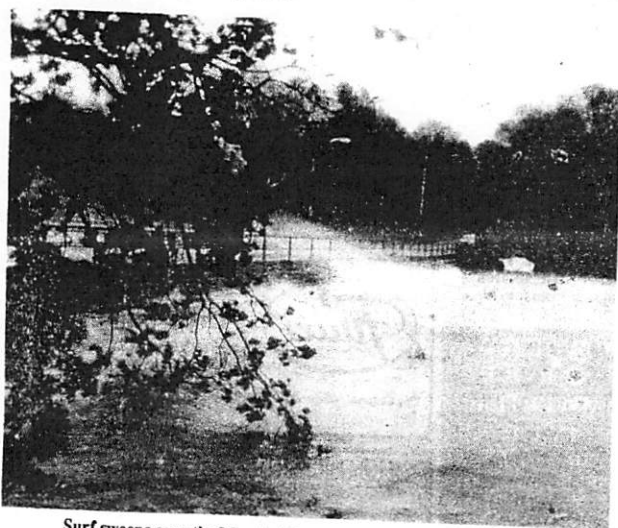
Deep grooves in the dunes occurred along the beach.



The entire Blue Fish River area was flooded Wednesday afternoon. Here vehicles head toward flagpole through rising water.



The storm wiped out years of beach grass planting efforts to save the dunes.



Surf sweeps over the Marshall St. bridge on Standish Shore.



More than 24 pieces of heavy equipment were brought in by the Army Corps and Beach Reservation to reshape the dunes and redefine the beach road.

Photos by Chris Bernstein, Tom Groux, Deni Johnson, Paula Maxwell, Fran Nichols, and Judy Randall